

The five most underused Finder tools

Speed up working with files by taking advantage of these shortcuts

1. Spring-Loaded Folders

If you drag a file over a folder and pause, the folder will pop open and show its contents after a short delay. Drag the file over another folder in that window, and that folder will also open. Use this “spring-loaded folder” feature to move files deep into your folder hierarchy without having to open individual windows. And there are two shortcuts: press the spacebar while holding a file over a folder to open it immediately, and press the escape key to cancel a move before you release a file. This feature is on by default. If you’d like to change the delay, go to Finder: Preferences and adjust the Spring-Loaded Folders And Windows Delay slider.

2. The Toolbar

Have certain files, folders, or even programs you want access quickly from any Finder window? Drag their icons onto the Finder’s toolbar at the top of the window. Drag an icon to a space in the toolbar—say, to the right of the buttons—and wait a second; the cursor will show a plus-sign (+) icon, and then the item will be added to that space. Command-drag an icon to remove it from the toolbar. Control-click on the toolbar and select Customize Toolbar from the contextual menu for even more options.

3. The Path Bar

Choose View -> Show Path Bar to reveal this bar at the bottom of your Finder windows. It shows you exactly where the selected file is in your computer’s folder hierarchy, no matter which view you’re using. You can drag files or folders into other folders shown in the path bar, so this is a good way to move files up to a higher level in your hierarchy. You can also go to any folder by double-clicking on it in the path bar.

4. Proxy Icons

That tiny icon you see in the title bar of every Finder window is more than just eye candy. Control-click on it to reveal a pop-up menu showing the current folder hierarchy. Select a folder to jump there. If you hold down the command

key while selecting a folder, it opens in a new Finder window.

5. Arrow Keys

There's no need to click your way around the Finder. Press command-up arrow to move up in your folder hierarchy, and Command-down arrow to enter a folder or open a file or program. Press a single arrow key to move around in a window. Press the up- and down-arrow keys to move through List View, Column View, and Cover Flow View. Press the right- and left-arrow keys to move around in Icon View.